



For Immediate Release

County Commission Adopts New Heritage Village Master Plan

CLEARWATER, Fla—On Jan. 24, 2006, the Pinellas County Commission adopted a Strategic Master Plan that will guide the continued growth and development of the county's historical museum, Heritage Village, over the course of the next fifteen years. Implementation of this master plan firmly points Heritage Village in the direction of becoming an innovative and groundbreaking living history museum and major historic destination for Pinellas County and Florida.

Heritage Village, like many other museums across the country, was created around the nation's bicentennial. For the next twenty-five years, the county and the community stayed busy saving the buildings, now numbering 28, that comprise the open air museum itself. The time has come to use these buildings collectively to tell the story of Pinellas County history, especially as the county's centennial celebration approaches in 2012.

One key element of the plan consists of an interpretive strategy that uses four major themes to illustrate the diverse history of the Pinellas Peninsula: Coastal Living, Agriculture, Community Life and Tourism. A second element provides for an enhancement of the visitor's experience, including the construction of a Folk Culture Center on the property's northern edge for better orientation and improved accessibility throughout the park. Third, inadequate and outdated storage facilities will be addressed with the construction of a new Archives and Collections building, supporting an improved method for the active collecting of historical material to support and implement the museum's interpretation.

"I'm thrilled that we can move forward with the plan," said Heritage Village director, Jan Luth. "It was an extraordinarily inclusive process with many stakeholders

having a voice and taking part in the master plan's development. This is the result of many thorough and thoughtful dialogues.”

Included in the discussions were the Pinellas County Historical Commission, Pinellas County Historical Society, museum staff, volunteers, historical interpreters, partnership groups and clubs, academicians (University of south Florida and Eckerd College) and other County staff.

Funding for the project, estimated at \$13 million over the next fifteen years, will come from the museum's operational budget, the CIP program, grants, sponsorships, philanthropy and user fees.

For more information on the Heritage Village Strategic Master Plan, please contact Jan Luth at (727) 582-2201.

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